

Corporate Parenting Board

14 September 2023

Report title	Adoption Service Annual Report	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Chris Burden Children, Young People and Education	
Wards affected	All wards	
Accountable director	Emma Bennett, Executive Director of Families	
Originating service	Adoption@Heart	
Accountable employee	Lisa Preston	Head of Service
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Report has been considered by	Children in Care Council (CiCC)	21 June 2023
	Cabinet Member Briefing: Children, Young People and Education	04 July 2023
	Corporate Parenting Board	14 September 2023

Recommendation for action:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Receive the Adoption Service Report for Adoption@Heart.

Recommendations for noting:

The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to note:

1. The progress made by the Regional Adoption Agency.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report fulfils the obligations in Adoption National Minimum Standards (2011) and Adoption Service Statutory Guidance (2011) Adoption and Children Act 2002 to report to the “executive side” of the local authority. This has guided the structure and information set out in the report attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 It is important to note that data and information within this report is accurate as of 31 March 2023.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Adoption@Heart is a Regional Adoption Agency providing adoption services on behalf of Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and City of Wolverhampton Councils. The service is hosted by City of Wolverhampton Council and went live on 1 April 2019. Following a directive from the Department for Education in 2015, all local authorities in England are required to enter into regional arrangements for their adoption services by 2020.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 The report (Appendix 1) provides the detail of performance and the progress the service has made from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 The budget for 2022-2023 was £4,817,907 and the agreed contributions from each of the partners are shown below:

Partner Authority	Total Contribution 2022 - 2023
Dudley MBC	1,150,169
Sandwell MBC	1,316,347
Walsall MBC	1,154,617
City of Wolverhampton Council	1,196,773
Total to be funded	4,817,907

- 4.2 The outturn position for 2022-2023 was an underspend of £741,000. Any underspends over and above agreed reserves are returned to partners as per the financial funding protocol.
[JB/20062023/A]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 The collaboration agreement which outlines the requirements of all partners was agreed with oversight from the council's legal service, prior to the service becoming operational in April 2019. This remains the underpinning legal agreement. Primary legislation is in place requiring all councils in England to enter into regional arrangements by 2020.
[SB/18062023/D]

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 There are no equalities implications to highlight at this stage.

7.0 Climate Change and Environmental implications

7.1 There are no climate change or environmental implications in place at this stage.

8.0 Human resources implications

8.1 Staff in the service are employed by the City of Wolverhampton Council following a Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) exercise in April 2019.

9.0 Corporate Landlord implications

9.1 The Adoption@Heart service is located at Priory Green Offices, Pendeford. There are no property portfolio implications at this stage as the service will remain at this location for the foreseeable future. Staff have the flexibility of working from home and from the A@H office.

10.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications

10.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications in place at this stage.

11.0 Schedule of background papers

11.1 Appendix 1: Adoption Service Report